United Nations S/PRST/2014/8

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 May 2014

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7171st meeting of the Security Council, held on 12 May 2014, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Central African region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the deterioration in the security situation in parts of Central Africa within the remit of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in particular the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) and its growing regional impact, and the threat of terrorism, including the expansion of Boko Haram terrorist activities into countries in the sub-region. The Council also expresses its continuing concern regarding maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illegal wildlife trade and transnational organised crime.

"The Security Council pays tribute to the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Central Africa and head of UNOCA, Abou Moussa of Chad, for his leadership in support of consolidating peace and preventing conflict in the Central African region and important accomplishments of UNOCA during his tenure, and welcomes the appointment of Abdoulaye Bathily of Senegal as the new SRSG for Central Africa and head of UNOCA.

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the appalling attacks, war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights, including the LRA's recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, killing and maiming, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and abductions. The Council demands an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA and urges the LRA to release all those abducted, and to disarm and demobilise. The Council welcomes the progress made with regard to ending LRA war crimes and crimes against humanity in Central Africa and reiterates its resolve to maintain the current momentum until a permanent end to the threat posed by the LRA has been achieved.

"The Security Council welcomes the diplomatic efforts of outgoing SRSG Abou Moussa and African Union (AU) Special Envoy on the LRA Issue Francisco Madeira to strengthen regional cooperation and facilitate continued AU-Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) operations in the region. The Council urges UNOCA, in its coordination role, as well as the United Nations political

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and peacekeeping missions in the region and other relevant United Nations presences to enhance their efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA (the UN strategy), as appropriate and within the limits of their mandates and capacities. The Council encourages the Secretary-General to optimise UNOCA's efforts in this regard, including through the use of staff and provision of support to anti-LRA efforts.

"The Security Council reiterates its strong support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (AU RCI-LRA), and commends the significant progress made by the AU-RTF. The Council notes in particular the reported death in late 2013 of the LRA's second-in-command Okot Odhiambo, who was indicted by the International Criminal Court and the capture of LRA mid-level commander Charles Okello in April 2014. The Council welcomes the AU-RTF's enhanced operations against the LRA in recent months, which have increased pressure on the LRA command structure and resulted in several significant defections of LRA fighters and the rescue of women and children from the LRA's ranks. The Council expresses its concern at the creation of potential security vulnerabilities resulting from the increased instability in South Sudan that could be exploited by the LRA. The Council urges all regional governments to fulfil all their commitments under the AU RCI-LRA and to provide the necessary basic provisions for their security forces. In this regard, the Council welcomes the decisions of the recent AU RCI-LRA to hold quarterly meetings as well as a Summit of RCI-LRA Member States. The Council notes the importance of continued international support for the AU-RTF's operations, logistics, and headquarters. In this regard, the Council welcomes the continued advisory and logistical support provided by the United States as well as funding provided by the European Union. The Council underlines the need for all military action against the LRA to be conducted in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as applicable, and to minimise the risk of harm to civilians in all areas of operation and to take into account the association of children with the LRA. The Council also reiterates its encouragement to deploy child protection advisers within the AU-RTF.

"The Security Council strongly encourages neighbouring states to cooperate with the AU-RTF, in order to end the LRA threat. The Council further encourages all states in the region to take measures to ensure that the LRA is not able to operate with impunity in their territory. The Council takes note of the statements in the Secretary-General report on UNOCA and LRA (S/2014/319) that senior LRA leaders are believed to be based in the north-eastern part of CAR and that credible sources suggest that the LRA leader Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders have recently returned to seek safe haven in Sudanese-controlled areas of the Kafia Kingi enclave. The Security Council expresses its continued concern that the instability and security vacuum in the CAR continue to negatively affect counter-LRA operations. The Council further notes with concern reports of LRA attacks, as well as interactions between the LRA and other armed groups, in areas of the CAR outside of the AU-RTF's principal area of operations. In this regard, the Council emphasises the need for strong coordination and information-sharing between the AU-RTF and the African-led International Support Mission for the

Central African Republic (MISCA), as well as with the United Nations Integrated Stabilisation Mission in CAR (MINUSCA), in the context of their protection of civilians activities, human rights monitoring, and counter-LRA operations, as appropriate.

"The Security Council welcomes the steps taken to deliver an enhanced, comprehensive, and more regional approach to the humanitarian situation, including assistance to victims of sexual violence and other attacks and urges further progress in this regard.

"The Security Council underlines the primary responsibility of States in the LRA-affected region to protect civilians. The Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of South Sudan, Uganda and CAR, in coordination with the African Union, to end the threat posed by the LRA, and urges further efforts from these countries, as well as from other countries in the region.

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts by the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in tackling the LRA. The Council notes continued reports of LRA attacks in the DRC, despite an overall decline in LRA violence there. In this context the Council encourages further and reinforced efforts by MONUSCO, working closely with the AU-RTF, to address the LRA including through improved responsiveness to imminent threats to civilians, increased and coordinated patrols, training and capacity building of the Congolese Army (FARDC), support to the Joint Information Operations Centre (JIOC), and implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programme to encourage and facilitate further LRA defections.

"The Security Council urges relevant UN and AU missions in the region, notably MONUSCO, United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and MINUSCA, to continue their efforts to combat the LRA. The Council also notes the mandate of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to cooperate and share swiftly information related to the regional threat of the LRA and the mandate of MINUSCA to coordinate its operations with those of the African Union Regional Task Force on the Lord's Resistance Army, and share relevant information with the AU-RTF and with non-governmental organisations involved in tackling the threat of the LRA. In this regard, the Council urges these missions to collect and share information on LRA movements with relevant partners, to enhance cross-border cooperation, and to adopt Standard Operating Procedures, in order to better anticipate LRA movements and imminent threats of attack.

"The Security Council strongly reiterates its calls for the UN, AU and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), to continue to work together, including through joint field assessments, to further develop and maintain a common operating picture of the LRA's current capabilities and areas of operation, as well as to investigate the LRA's logistical networks and possible sources of military support and illicit financing, including alleged involvement in elephant poaching and related illicit smuggling. The Council expresses its concern at the link between illicit trafficking in wildlife and armed groups in the sub-region, including the Lord's Resistance Army, and, in

this regard, welcomes UNOCA's efforts to support the sub-region to identify collaborative approaches to address this issue.

"The Security Council urges MONUSCO, MINUSCA, UNMISS, and other United Nations actors in the LRA-affected region to continue to work with regional forces, national governments, international actors and non-governmental organisations, as appropriate, to develop a common approach to the promotion of defections and support for DDRRR efforts across the LRA-affected area. The Council highlights the importance of programmes in support of the release, return and successful reintegration of children abducted by the LRA, in particular those that target community acceptance of such children. The Council welcomes the defection in December 2013 of 19 LRA members, including 9 LRA fighters, which is the largest single defection in over five years.

"The Security Council encourages the AU-RTF to maintain its operations against all LRA groups, while working with the UN and non-governmental organisations to expand the coverage of safe reporting sites and delivery of information to assist LRA who demonstrate a genuine commitment to demobilisation and disarmament via radio, leaflets, and other means.

"The Security Council commends efforts by international donors to provide humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected populations in the CAR, the DRC and the Republic of South Sudan. The Council reaffirms its call for all parties to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council notes the overall marked decline in the number, intensity and violence of the LRA attacks, killings and abductions and the significant decrease in UN OCHA's estimate of the number of people displaced by the LRA threat, from 420,000 in March 2013 to 160,000 in March 2014. The Council encourages donors to increase funding for early recovery projects to help affected communities restore stability and rebuild their livelihoods as the LRA threat begins to recede. The Council requests that UNOCA work with the AU, World Bank, the UN Development Program, the UN Children's Fund and other international experts to develop a development framework for international efforts to promote the long-term stabilization of formerly LRA-affected areas in South Sudan, the DRC, and the CAR, including through early recovery projects and programs to strengthen community cohesion.

"The Security Council reiterates its call for the swift and full implementation of the conclusions of the working group on children and armed conflict concerning the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. In this regard, the Council encourages those countries affected by the LRA which have not yet done so to establish Standard Operating Procedures for the reception and handover of LRA children to civilian child protection actors.

"The Security Council recalls that the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for LRA leaders, including Joseph Kony on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape cruel treatment, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population and forced

enlistment of children, have yet to be executed, and calls upon all States to cooperate with relevant national governments and the International Criminal Court, in accordance with their respective obligations, in order to execute those warrants, and to bring to justice those responsible.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General keep it informed on the activities of UNOCA, progress made in conducting assessments of the LRA's evolving area of operations and logistical and support networks, and the efforts being undertaken respectively by missions in the region and other relevant United Nations agencies to implement the UN's Regional Strategy, including through a single report on UNOCA and the LRA to be submitted before 15 November 2014."